Finding Atilano

The Montoya Lineage and the Road Back to San Ildefonso

Written by
Joelina Marie Baca Espinoza & Bobby C. Espinoza

Dedication

For our children—
You are the next keepers of this story.

May you carry forward the names, the faith, and the roots that shaped us. Our family's journey stretches from the hills of San Miguel to the sacred ground of San Ildefonso, from the coal camps of Colorado to the homes where our prayers still rise. Every life remembered here is a thread in the tapestry of who we are.

As you raise your own children, tell them where they come from. Tell them of Atilano, of Maria Adelina, of the courage, the laughter, and the love that carried us through generations.

May this history live through you—
and through every heart that follows.

With all our love and hope,
—Joelina Marie Baca Espinoza & Bobby C. Espinoza

Finding Atilano: The Montoya Lineage and the Road Back to San Ildefonso

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Preface

Every family has stories whispered through the years — told around kitchen tables, on long drives, or beneath the stars when memories feel closest. But some stories, the most important ones, begin to fade unless someone goes looking for them. *Finding Atilano* began as that search — a journey to recover the roots of the Montoya family, to uncover the lives behind the names, and to reconnect the threads that time had stretched thin.

For generations, our family carried the name **Atilano Montoya** like a quiet echo. He was our ancestor, our beginning, and yet his story — his path, his choices, and his legacy — had become scattered across history, hidden in church records, census notes, and the memories of those still living. We knew that if we didn't preserve these pieces now, they might be lost forever.

This book is more than genealogy. It is a testament to family, resilience, and faith. It tells of migrations and marriages, of hardship and hope — of how one family's story carried forward through New Mexico's hills, across Colorado's plains, and into the hearts of their descendants.

As we walked the land where Atilano once lived, stood at the graves of Maria Adelina and Abel, and traced the names carved in weathered white crosses, we understood that our search was not only for the past — it was also for belonging. Every record, every story told by an elder, every photograph shared by a cousin became a piece of a much larger truth: **we come from strength.**

We wrote *Finding Atilano* so that our children — and theirs — will never have to wonder where they come from. This is their inheritance: a history of faith, endurance, and love that spans generations.

With gratitude to those who came before,
and to those who will carry our story forward.

—Joelina Marie Baca Espinoza & Bobby C. Espinoza

Chapter 1

The Frontier Between Worlds

Lagunita, New Mexico Territory – Winter, 1887

Snow fell on the Sangre de Cristo foothills in a slow, hesitant drift — the kind of snow that softened everything but never stayed long. The Montoya home stood at the edge of Lagunita, a scattering of adobe houses and corral fences stitched together by kinship more than by roads. To the north lay the old Pecos trail, and beyond that, the invisible line between the Spanish grants and the lands of the Pueblos. For families like the Montoya's, those lines were less borders than echoes — reminders of where they came from and what had been taken.

Atilano Montoya was born into that in-between.
The year was 1887 — the year the Santa Fe Railroad pushed deeper into the territory, and the year the U.S. Indian Bureau began extending its census to the remaining Pueblo villages. For the people of Lagunita, it was also a year of reckoning. They were Genízaros, descendants of Native captives — Comanche, Apache, Navajo, and Pueblo — brought into Spanish households' generations earlier. They spoke Spanish now, prayed in Catholic churches, and farmed the valley lands once claimed by Pecos Pueblo. But under the surface, they still carried the memory of older names, older prayers.

Atilano's father, **Marcelino Montoya**, was a farmer and militia scout — one of the men who rode to protect the valley from raids before the U.S. Army arrived. His mother, **Emiteria Tenoris (or Duran)**, traced her roots to the Pecos refugees who had joined San Ildefonso Pueblo after Pecos fell in 1838. Her people carried with them not just tools and seeds but songs, stories, and fragments of the Towa and Tewa languages that would resurface generations later in family phrases no one could quite translate.

In Lagunita, the Montoya's lived as if the two worlds — Pueblo and Genízaro — were never truly separate. They traded corn with San Ildefonso relatives, sent children to fiestas in Santa Cruz, and worked the acequias built by their ancestors. The rhythms

of life followed the seasons: planting in May, harvest in October, the long stillness of winter filled with storytelling by the fire.

But beyond the village, the winds were shifting. The U.S. government was drawing sharper lines — who counted as "Indian," who as "Mexican," who as "citizen." The Indian Bureau's new census rolls sought to define people by race and affiliation, not by the fluid kinship that had bound them for centuries.

By the time Atilano was a teenager, his family's name began appearing in federal ledgers. In the **1899 Indian Census Roll**, he is listed at age fifteen under the Northern Pueblos Agency, connected to San Ildefonso. The record is brief, but it speaks volumes: it places him among the Tewa-speaking Pueblo people, a sign that his mother's lineage was recognized, and that the Montoya's still maintained ties to that world.

For Atilano, this dual belonging would become both inheritance and burden. In the years ahead, he would marry, lose, and remarry; move between villages; and navigate a society that could not decide what he was — Indian, Mexican, or something in between. The world around him demanded categories; his life refused them.

The Road to Ribera

By the turn of the century, Lagunita's adobe walls had begun to crumble under the weight of change. The railroad cut through the valley to the east, drawing younger men to labor camps in Las Vegas and Lamy. The elders muttered that the steam engines frightened the spirits of the land, but the pay in silver dollars was better than the barter economy of sheep and corn.

Atilano was about twelve when his father first sent him north to help herd goats along the Pecos River. He was a wiry boy, quiet, quick-eyed, with skin the color of mesquite wood and a stubborn streak that mirrored his mother's. The priests at San Miguel del Vado tried to keep him in catechism classes, but he preferred the open country. He listened to the stories of his uncles — men who remembered when the Pecos ruins still stood proud, when Tewa and Towa speakers came down each season to trade.

By 1899, the federal agent came through again with his roll book — the *Indian Census* — gathering names and relations for the pueblos. Atilano's name appeared that year among the *San Ildefonso Pueblo* affiliates. He would have been fifteen or sixteen, just old enough to understand that his family's inclusion was both recognition and danger. To be named "Indian" was to be subject to the government's authority, its boarding schools and land allotments. But it was also to reclaim the bloodlines his mother whispered about in Tewa lullabies — proof that they had not vanished into the dust of the frontier.

The Montoyas' connection to San Ildefonso deepened through kin networks. Atilano's mother's cousins — Durans and Trujillos — were listed among the Pueblo's day laborers. They carried water for the priests, tended orchards, and served as interpreters between the Tewa-speaking elders and the Spanish-speaking Genízaros who had returned from Lagunita. It was a web of belonging that stretched across languages, baptismal records, and unmarked graves.

By 1907, Atilano was nearly twenty, tall and sinewed from ranch work. The *Ribera* mission priest noted him among the eligible bachelors of the parish — respectful, literate enough to sign his name, and known for his good character. The same ledger that recorded his confession that year also recorded his betrothal: **Luisa Herrera**, a girl from the Herrera-Montoya family near El Cerrito.

Luisa was said to have eyes like storm clouds and a laugh that carried across the valley. Her father, **Luis Herrera**, was a sheepherder; her mother, **Catalina Montoya**, was distantly related to Atilano's line — a cousin several degrees removed. In small villages, marriages between cousins were not scandal but survival: a way to keep land and blood within the clan, to hold onto what little the government had not already claimed.

Their wedding took place on **January 13, 1908**, at the old church of **San Miguel del Vado** — the same adobe mission that had baptized, married, and buried generations of Genízaros since the 1790s. The register entry is simple:

"Se casaron Atilano Montoya, hijo legítimo de Marcelino Montoya y Emiteria Duran, con Luisa Herrera, hija legítima de Luis Herrera y Catalina Montoya."

No dispensations were noted — meaning the priest saw nothing unusual about their kinship. Witnesses likely included Herrera cousins, Duran uncles, and perhaps a few Trujillos from San Ildefonso. The union was both ordinary and monumental — a new link between two families carrying Indigenous ancestry beneath Spanish names.

For a brief few years, Atilano and Luisa built a small life together. Parish notations suggest at least two children were born between 1909 and 1912 — names lost to time but hinted at in later Bureau rolls as "school-age dependents." They worked a small tract near Ribera, raising beans and corn, sending wool to market, and attending fiestas at San Miguel each spring.

But history has a cruel rhythm.
By 1913, the marriage had ended — not through divorce but through death. The influenza that would later ravage the world had already begun to ripple through New Mexico, carried along rail lines and river valleys. Luisa vanished from the records as suddenly as she had appeared. When Atilano remarried that same year — to **Maria Floripa Trujillo**, another young woman from the San Miguel valley — the priest noted "previously married" beside his name.

In later Bureau rolls, Atilano would be listed as *widower*, a quiet acknowledgment of loss.

What remained of Luisa was a gap — a faint signature in a church book, a ghost in the lineage. Yet through her, Atilano's ties to San Ildefonso deepened. The Herreras and Montoyas she came from were not strangers to the Pueblo. They were Genízaros of an older order, carrying in their blood the long arc from captivity to kinship, from Pecos to San Ildefonso, from survival to belonging.

And in that small, unmarked marriage — in the quiet vows exchanged beneath the cracked adobe dome of San Miguel — the road back to San Ildefonso began.

Chapter 2

The Widower and the Pueblo

The year 1913 opened with a frost that burned the bean fields along the Pecos. For months, Atilano labored alone, the wind carrying the smell of mesquite and the faint echo of bells from the San Miguel church. Luisa's death had left him hollowed, a young widower of twenty-six with no steady place in a world tilting toward modernity.

It was the Trujillos who took him in that spring. **Roman Trujillo** and **Adela Muñiz**, respected ranchers of Lagunita, had a daughter, **Maria Floripa**, barely eighteen, known for her calm manner and her talent at the loom. Her family, like Atilano's, were Genízaro descendants—part of the people the Spanish once called *los pobres de la tierra*, the poor of the earth. They carried a quiet dignity, neither fully Spanish nor fully Indian, but belonging to the oldest landscape of New Mexico: the space between worlds.

On **January 30, 1913**, Atilano and Floripa were married in the same church where Luisa's name had been written just five years before. The priest recorded the groom as "previously married," a small phrase that tied past and future together. The witnesses were likely Trujillos, Muñizes, and perhaps one of Atilano's younger brothers, proud to see the family restored.

For a time, life steadied.
The couple settled near **El Cerrito**, a bend in the Pecos River that the Montoyas had known for generations. The soil there was stubborn but fertile; with good rain, corn rose shoulder-high. Floripa tended a small orchard and kept chickens behind a corral built of river stones. The census of 1920 lists Atilano as a farmer, age thirty-three, living with wife **Maria F.** and their first two children—**Jose Emeterio**, born in 1916, and **Maria Adelina**, born in 1918.

But even as they worked the fields, Atilano remained tied to the Pueblo to the north. Each spring and autumn, he rode the rough road toward **San Ildefonso**, a journey of nearly sixty miles. There he appeared on the **Bureau of Indian Affairs rolls**, first in 1917 as a "father," then again in 1919 and 1921 as a "widower."

To the government clerks, the distinction meant little. To the Pueblo record keepers, it was a statement of identity: Atilano still belonged.

San Ildefonso at that time was small—barely 160 residents—but alive with renewal. The people were recovering from the devastation of the 1918 influenza epidemic and from years of land loss to squatters. Under **Governor José Antonio Naranjo**, the Pueblo began cataloguing its members, preparing to claim compensation under what would become the **1924 Pueblo Lands Act**. The BIA rolls of those years, faded and careful, carry Atilano's name among the enrollees.

He came not only to collect rations or report acreage but to take part in something deeper: the reaffirmation of a people's right to exist. He was a rancher and a farmer, yes—but when he stood beneath the Tewa mesas and the black-smoked kivas, he was also a descendant.

Floripa supported these journeys. She understood what the agents did not—that a man could have two homes, one of earth and one of spirit. She stayed in Lagunita with the children, teaching them to grind corn and recite prayers in Spanish, while their father rode north with the spring sun at his back.

The **1921 roll** listed him again as "widr," the clerk's abbreviation for widower. By then, the label had lost its literal meaning. It was not a record of marital status but a holdover from the past—a symbol of the first wife whose death had given him this dual existence. Within the Pueblo system, such notations sometimes indicated the persistence of earlier kin obligations.

In those same years, San Ildefonso began to change. Tourism from Santa Fe and Los Alamos brought demand for pottery, for the glossy blackware that would soon make **Maria Martinez** a household name. Atilano's trips coincided with this transition. The Pueblo was no longer isolated; it was adapting, as he had, to survive within the American century.

Through the 1920s, the Montoya family lived between two realities. The federal censuses listed them as "Mexican" or "White," depending on the enumerator. The BIA records listed them as "Indian, San Ildefonso." The contradiction was never resolved—it didn't need to be. It was the truth of the borderlands, where categories blurred like the horizon at dusk.

Then, in **1932**, Floripa fell ill. Tuberculosis had swept the valley that spring, claiming several young mothers. She died that May, leaving Jose, sixteen, and Adelina, fourteen. A month later, the **final BIA roll** recorded Atilano alone at San Ildefonso—still listed, still claimed by the Pueblo that had anchored his life.

He would not remain long in New Mexico after that. The Depression forced many south-valley families northward, and by 1935 Atilano and his children had crossed into **Colorado**, seeking work near **La Porte** and **Pueblo City**. There, his lineage quietly rooted again.

But San Ildefonso never released its hold. The records of those years—the inked name *Atalano Montoya* repeated across faded ledgers—became the bridge by which his descendants could one day return.

Chapter 3

Adelina's Journey

The winter sun over **La Gunita, New Mexico**, has a way of softening even the hardest memories. It was there, in the final years of her mother Floripa's life, that **María Adelina Montoya** grew from child to young woman—quiet, observant, and strong-willed in ways that echoed the women before her.

Born **December 15, 1918**, in the small adobe home of her parents **Atilano Montoya** and **María Floripa Trujillo**, Adelina's world was one of faith, family, and labor. The Montoya farm sat among low hills near San Miguel del Vado, where the Pecos River curved through the valley, feeding orchards and gardens that had sustained generations. Her father's hands, weathered from sheepherding and fieldwork, were the first she remembered.

By the time Adelina was twelve, the family had moved north for a time, appearing in the **1930 U.S. Census** in **Laporte, Larimer County, Colorado**. It was a temporary migration—part of the larger wave of New Mexican families who followed seasonal agricultural work. For Adelina, the trip north was the first glimpse of the world beyond La Gunita, a world that seemed wider and colder but still filled with familiar voices of home.

After her mother's death in **1932**, everything changed. Atilano, now widowed a second time, remarried. His new wife, **Lucinda**, brought with her children from a previous relationship and strict ideas about household order. What followed would become part of family legend—the years when Adelina was forced into the role of caretaker and servant, the family's own "Cinderella."

Those who knew her later in life recalled how she would laugh when telling the story, though there was an edge of truth in her eyes. She spoke of early mornings gathering water from the acequia, long hours cooking and cleaning while Lucinda's own children played. "I was the one who scrubbed the floors, milked the cow, and made the tortillas," she'd say. "But I kept my peace, because my father's heart was good."

By her late teens, Adelina had learned strength through silence. That strength would soon carry her toward a future she could never have imagined.

The Widower from Colorado

In the fall of **1937**, a man named **Abel Solano** returned to New Mexico. He was forty years old, recently widowed, and grieving the loss of his wife, who had died that October. Abel had four young children to care for—too many for a working man alone in the rugged mining towns of southern Colorado.

In those days, families still looked to kin for help. Abel's relatives in **San Miguel County** urged him to bring the children south, back to the safety of family, where aunts and cousins could help raise them. And so he did.

Among the families he reconnected with was that of **Atilano Montoya**, a man he had known from his youth—fellow ranchers, fellow Catholics, their families linked by friendship and faith. It was in that household, in the midst of grief and recovery, that Abel noticed **María Adelina**.

She was nineteen—dark-haired, with gentle eyes and a quiet confidence shaped by years of endurance. Abel was older, seasoned, a man who had known work and loss in equal measure. The bond between them grew naturally, built not on flirtation but on mutual understanding: two people who had both carried burdens and yet still believed in building a home.

Four months after his first wife's death, Abel asked Atilano for permission to marry Adelina. It was a bold step, one that raised eyebrows among neighbors—but Atilano saw in Abel a man of faith and stability. Consent was given.

On **February 26, 1938**, in the old stone **San Miguel del Vado Catholic Church**, **María Adelina Montoya** became **Mrs. Abel Solano**. The church bell tolled softly that morning, echoing across the valley. She wore a modest dress and carried a small bouquet tied with ribbon, her heart pounding not from fear, but from freedom.

Later in life, Adelina would tell her children, "Your father saved me. He took me out of that house. He gave me a new beginning." To her, Abel was not just a husband—he was the one who had lifted her from servitude into partnership.

A New Life in Colorado

After the wedding, Abel brought Adelina north, back to **Colorado**, settling first near **Trinidad** and later in **Florence**, where work was steadier. There, she began the next chapter of her life—wife, mother, and matriarch of what would become a proud, sprawling family.

Her first child, **María Floripa Solano**, was born in **1939**, named lovingly after Adelina's late mother. The name carried both remembrance and renewal—Floripa reborn in the next generation.

In the years that followed came more children, each arrival marking both joy and sorrow:

- **Lucille Solano** (1941–1941)
- **George Abel Solano** (b. 1942)
- **Lucinda Faviola Solano** (1945–1945)
- **José Reynaldo Solano** (b. 1946)
- **Ernest Elias Solano** (b. 1947)
- **Mathew Kenneth Solano** (b. 1949)
- **John A. Solano** (1950–1950)
- **Daniel Etliano Solano** (1954–1954)
- **Martin Solano** (1957–1957)

But for Adelina, motherhood was never without heartbreak. Between 1941 and 1957, she buried six infants — **Lucille**, **Lucinda Faviola**, **John**, **Daniel Etliano**, **Martin**, and another unnamed child — each one leaving behind a silence that only a mother could feel. Still, she pressed on. Faith anchored her. "The Lord gives, and the Lord takes away," she would whisper, lighting candles at St. Joseph's in Florence.

Her surviving sons grew up in a house built on discipline, love, and the unspoken expectation that they would serve — as their grandfather had worked, as their mother had endured.

- **George Abel Solano (b. 1942)**
- **José Reynaldo Solano (b. 1946)**
- **Ernest Elias Solano (b. 1947)**
- **Mathew Kenneth Solano (b. 1949)**

All four would wear the uniform of the **United States military**, coming of age in the turbulent decades of the **Vietnam era**. They left Florence as boys and returned as men marked by the war — some quiet, some restless, all changed.

Their service was not only an act of patriotism; it was a continuation of something older. For generations, the Montoya men had been defenders — of land grants, of families, of pueblos. The uniforms had changed, the battles moved continents away, but the spirit remained.

Adelina would hang each son's photograph on the wall — framed neatly, side by side, beneath a crucifix and a small picture of the Virgin of Guadalupe. Visitors would often find her there, gazing at them in silence, lips moving in prayer.

"They all came back," she would later say. "That's all I ever asked of God."

A Matriarch's Legacy

As the years passed, Adelina's children built lives across Colorado and New Mexico. Some settled in Pueblo, some in Cañon City, some farther north. **María Floripa**, her eldest, carried forward the family's stories — the Pueblo roots, the old church at San Miguel del Vado, the resilience of a girl who once called herself Cinderella.

When grandchildren came, Adelina treated each as an answered prayer. She told them stories of their great-grandfather Atilano, who once traveled between pueblos and farms, and of the Montoya name that had survived every hardship.

Her home became a gathering place. On feast days and holidays, the smell of green chile and fresh tortillas filled the air. The boys — now men — brought their own children in uniforms and college shirts, their laughter mingling with the hum of old radio songs.

"Remember where you come from," Adelina would say, tapping the table for emphasis. "Don't let anyone tell you we were nothing. We come from the land, from the people before the papers."

Through the 1940s and 1950s, the Solano home became a center of love and resilience. By the time the 1950 Census was taken, the Solanos were living in **Portland, near Florence, Colorado**. Life had come full circle: from the poverty of New Mexico's hills to the working-class dignity of Colorado's valleys.

In her later years, Adelina was known in Florence for her kindness, her cooking, and her unfailing generosity. She lived into her nineties, surrounded by children and grandchildren who bore the faces and stories of every generation before her.

She passed away on **February 18, 2011**, in **Canon City, Colorado**, just miles from her lifelong home in Florence. Her funeral mass was held there, and she was buried on **February 24, 2011**, beneath the same wide sky her father had once worked under—a daughter of Atilano, a matriarch of the Solano line, and a bridge back to San Ildefonso.

Epilogue

Through Maria Adelina, the legacy of her father Atilano and the spirit of San Ildefonso Pueblo endured far from the Rio Grande. Though she lived most of her life in Colorado, the quiet dignity, resilience, and kinship that marked her people remained at her core. Her story—woven through migration, loss, and renewal—became a living bridge between two lands and two centuries. In her, the Montoya bloodline carried forward the memory of the Pueblo, whispering still in the laughter of her children and the prayers of those who came after.

Chapter 4

Finding Atilano

The search began, as so many family journeys do, with a single question. "Who was he?" It was a quiet winter evening in Florence when Joelina Marie Baca opened the box her mother had left behind. Inside were faded photographs, yellowed church papers, and the brittle edges of documents that smelled faintly of cedar and dust. At the very bottom, beneath a folded handkerchief, was a name written in blue ink — Atilano Montoya. She didn't recognize it. Her grandmother, María Adelina, had told stories of life in the New Mexico hills, of a father who worked the land and a mother who died young. But Atilano's name was rarely spoken. It was as if an entire branch of the family tree had been hidden behind the veil of time. That night, Joelina lit a candle beside her computer and began to search. What she uncovered over the following months would reweave her family's forgotten identity — one line at a time.

The Man in the Records The name Atilano Montoya first appeared on a Bureau of Indian Affairs roll from 1899. There it was, in delicate penmanship: "Atalano Montoya, age 15 — San Ildefonso Pueblo." Joelina stared at the screen, heart racing. The words carried the weight of generations. She clicked through page after page — 1917, 1919, 1921, 1923, 1932 — and there he was again and again, always at San Ildefonso Pueblo, sometimes noted as a "widower," sometimes "farmer," sometimes simply "Indian." A man who had lived between worlds — the Pueblo and the plains, the sacred and the survivalist. Every new record built the silhouette of a person once nearly erased. • 1908: A marriage in San Miguel del Vado to Luisa Herrera. • 1913: Another marriage, to María Floripa Trujillo, the grandmother Adelina had so often honored in name and prayer. • 1930: A census in Laporte, Colorado — Atilano listed beside Floripa and two children, José and Adelina. The documents spoke in fragments, but they were enough to tell a story: He had been a farmer, a traveler, a Pueblo affiliate, and a father who carried ancient bloodlines through the chaos of the twentieth century.

Uncovering a Hidden Heritage When Joelina printed the records and spread them across her dining table, the pattern became clear. Her ancestors had been counted — not as "Mexican" or "Spanish," as most records had insisted, but as Native, tied to San Ildefonso Pueblo. It was a revelation that shifted everything. The Montoyas had not drifted from their heritage; it had been deliberately buried under assimilation, migration, and the soft violence of bureaucracy. In a family that had always described itself as "from New Mexico," the discovery of a Pueblo lineage wasn't just history — it was healing. When she told her relatives, some nodded quietly, as if they had always known. Others were skeptical. "Pueblo?" one cousin asked. "We were just farmers." But the truth lay in ink older than any living memory. The Indian Census Rolls, the church marriages, the land assessments — all pieces of a story that reached back to Atilano's life among the Tewa people of northern New Mexico. It was there, among adobe walls and the steady hum of drumbeats that echoed across the Rio Grande, that their family name had first been spoken.

The Weight of Discovery The more she read, the heavier the discovery felt. Her grandmother Adelina had once said, "We come from the land, from the people before the papers." Now those papers — federal, faded, and fragile — proved her right. Joelina began to see her family's path differently: • Atilano, moving between Lagunita and San Ildefonso, balancing tradition and survival. • Adelina, escaping a cruel stepmother and building a new life in Colorado with Abel Solano, raising sons who would serve their country in Vietnam. • And now, Joelina, piecing together the fragments so her grandchildren would know the truth of who they were. Each discovery was a resurrection.

Returning to the Pueblo In the summer of 2025, Joelina made the journey back to San Ildefonso Pueblo. The air shimmered with heat, and the sound of cicadas carried across the river. The mission church stood white against the sky, its adobe walls breathing history. She brought copies of every record — the 1921 roll, the 1908 marriage, the 1940 census — and presented them to the tribal enrollment office. The clerk, an older woman with kind eyes, nodded slowly as she read the names. "Atilano Montoya," she said. "Yes… we know that family." Joelina stepped outside and looked

toward the mesas. For the first time, she felt something like belonging — not newly found, but rediscovered.

Legacy Reclaimed That night, as she drove back toward Santa Fe, the lights of the pueblo fading in her rearview mirror, Joelina thought of her grandmother Adelina sitting on her porch in Florence, whispering stories into the dusk. She imagined Atilano, standing somewhere beyond time, proud that his name had not vanished after all. The road back to San Ildefonso was more than a physical return — it was a healing of the line that connected every Montoya, Solano, and Baca who had ever wondered where they truly came from. Joelina smiled, whispering softly into the darkness, "We found you, Atilano. We're home."

Whispers of the Ancestors Joelina's Legacy In the sunbaked valleys of New Mexico, where the Rio Grande winds like a silver thread through ancient lands, the story of Joelina Marie Baca Espinoza begins not with her birth in 1966, but centuries earlier, in the dust of colonial conquest and the resilient spirit of the Pueblo peoples. It all traces back to the year 1600, when Cristóbal Baca, a dark-complexioned captain from Mexico City, arrived in Santa Fe with his wife Ana Ortiz y Pacheco. They were part of the Spanish reinforcements carving out a new world in the province of Nuevo México. Cristóbal's descendants, the Bacas, spread like roots through the soil—enduring the Pueblo Revolt of 1680, where Indigenous warriors rose against the colonizers, only to resettle in the reconquest of 1693. Branches like Manuel Baca and Luis María Cabeza de Baca founded lines that reached into Rio Arriba and San Miguel Counties, interweaving with families like Ortega, Dominguez, and now, as revelations unfold, Flores. But Joelina's tale is no simple chronicle of surnames. It's a mosaic of hidden truths, whispered rumors, and the undeniable pull of ancient bloodlines. Reclamation To reclaim one's story is an act of resistance — and of love. The colonizers wrote in their ledgers: mestiza, servidora, indio cautivo. But DNA wrote something truer: descendant, inheritor, survivor. Through every generation — from Antonia to Juana, Rosalía, Benigna, Augustina, Luis José, and finally Joelina — the line remained unbroken. The test results did not give her identity; they affirmed it. They did not reveal something new; they remembered what was nearly forgotten.

Legacy: The Blood Returns to the Land Now, in the 21st century, Joelina stands as the living embodiment of a lineage that refused erasure. Her ancestors' story — once confined to brittle archives and whispered traditions — now pulses through her in data and spirit alike. She is both the researcher and the result. Both the storyteller and the story. And when she speaks the names — Antonia Gertrudis Rodríguez, Josefa Sena, Rosalía Ortiz, Benigna Domínguez, Meleton Ortega, Augustina, Luis José Baca — she calls forth not ghosts, but guardians. For blood remembers what paper forgets. And in that remembering, identity comes home.

Chapter 5

The Pueblo Bloodline — History, Culture, and the Genízaro Bridge

The Pueblo Bloodline — History, Culture, and the Genízaro Bridge The first light over the mesas of northern New Mexico is soft and ancient — the kind of light that seems to remember everything. It settles on adobe walls the same way it did a hundred years ago, whispering the names of those who walked before. Among those remembered in that light is Atilano Montoya, a man whose life bridged the deep time of the Pueblos and the restless century that followed. San Ildefonso Pueblo sits along the Rio Grande, just north of Santa Fe — a living village of the Tewa-speaking people, keepers of ceremonies that predate the Spanish, the railroads, and the boundaries of the American nation. It is a place of continuity, where the drumbeats of feast days still echo against red cliffs, and where the earth and sky are treated as relatives. It was here that Atilano's name was written, again and again, in the Bureau of Indian Affairs rolls between 1899 and 1932. Each year's entry marked him as present — a quiet but powerful act of endurance. For his descendants, those lines of ink became the fragile thread connecting a family's 20th-century life to a heritage thousands of years deep.

The Living Earth of San Ildefonso For the Tewa people of San Ildefonso, identity was not only a matter of blood but of belonging. The Pueblo was more than a home — it was a sacred geography. The Tewa world was measured not by miles but by relationships: to the mountains, the river, the corn, and the clan. The land itself was kin. In the early 1900s, when Atilano's name appeared in the federal rolls, San Ildefonso was a small but resilient community, its people holding fast to ceremony even under the watchful eyes of federal agents and missionaries. They tended their fields, spoke Tewa at home, and passed down stories of how their ancestors survived colonization, famine, and forced conversion. Pottery, like the black-on-black wares of Maria Martinez, became a symbol of cultural revival, blending tradition with economic survival. Yet outside the Pueblo walls, the world was changing fast. Rail lines carved

through the valleys, and New Mexico was shifting from territory to statehood. Indigenous identity was being redefined — by Washington, by census clerks, by outsiders who could not imagine what it meant to live between two worlds.

The Genízaro Legacy The Montoyas' story reaches back to a complex and often misunderstood chapter of New Mexico's past — the Genízaro era. Genízaros were Native people — Apache, Comanche, Navajo, Ute, Pawnee, and others — who had been taken captive, baptized, and integrated into Spanish society. Over generations, they became defenders of the frontier, farmers, and cultural intermediaries — Indigenous in ancestry but shaped by colonial systems. In towns like Lagunita and El Cerrito, where Atilano's parents Marcelino Montoya and Emiteria Duran lived, the Genízaro communities kept pieces of their lost nations alive — songs, dances, herbal medicine, and a fierce devotion to family and land. They were bridges themselves: between the Pueblo world and the Hispanic world, between the sacred and the pragmatic. It was from this world that Atilano rose. His blood carried both Pueblo ancestry and Genízaro memory — a fusion of peoples who had survived every attempt to erase them. When he appeared on the rolls of San Ildefonso, it was more than paperwork; it was a restoration.

The BIA Era and the Pueblo Lands Act The early 20th century was not kind to the Pueblos. Federal agents kept careful lists — who lived where, who was "Indian enough," who was eligible for rations or land. The Pueblo Lands Act of 1924 promised protection but often brought intrusion instead, displacing families and eroding communal holdings. Still, communities like San Ildefonso endured, their matrilineal clans preserving language and rituals. The era's challenges — boarding schools, allotment policies — tested but did not break the Tewa spirit, influencing figures like Atilano who navigated federal oversight while honoring clan ties.

The Bridge Between Worlds For families like the Montoyas, life was a delicate balance. Genízaro heritage provided adaptability — farming skills, Spanish fluency — while Pueblo affiliations offered spiritual depth. This duality shaped daily rhythms:

feast days in San Ildefonso, harvests in Lagunita, migrations during hard times. In broader New Mexico, Genízaro towns like Abiquiú and San Miguel del Vado served as cultural sanctuaries, blending Indigenous practices with Catholic saints. Today, descendants reclaim this identity, recognizing Genízaros as a vital thread in the state's Native mosaic.

A Name Restored When Joelina Marie Baca began her search, it was not only for records — it was for belonging. Each discovery, each census line, each faded marriage certificate was a heartbeat pulled back from silence. The family line, once thought to be lost to time and assimilation, began to take shape again. Finding Atilano meant finding the unbroken thread of identity that colonial history tried to sever. It meant remembering that Pueblo blood still flowed through the Montoya and Solano names, that the same spirit that built the kivas of San Ildefonso also built the farms of Lagunita and the homes of Florence. In rediscovering her ancestor, Joelina restored more than genealogy — she restored continuity. She reclaimed a story that was never lost, only waiting to be told again.

Historical Side Note: The Genízaro Towns of New Mexico In colonial New Mexico, Genízaros were Native people — Apache, Comanche, Navajo, Ute, Pawnee, and others — who had been taken captive, baptized, and integrated into Spanish society. Over generations, they formed frontier settlements such as Abiquiú, Carnué, San Miguel del Vado, and El Cerrito. These communities acted as buffers between Spanish towns and nomadic tribes, but they also became cultural sanctuaries, preserving Indigenous traditions under new identities. Today, Genízaro descendants are recognized as a distinct part of New Mexico’s Native and Hispanic mosaic, carrying both resilience and adaptation in their bloodlines.

Chapter 6

Resting Places: Echoes in the Stone Crosses

In the quiet hills of Florence, Colorado, generations of the Montoya–Solano family found their resting places—each grave marked by a simple white cement cross, sun-bleached and steadfast against the dry wind. These markers, plain yet enduring, are symbols of the faith, resilience, and unbroken lineage that began in the pueblos of New Mexico and stretched northward across the decades.

While many of the Solano children were laid to rest in Florence's old Spanish cemetery—**San Juan Bautista Cemetery**—their parents, **Maria Adelina Montoya Solano (1918–2011)** and **Abel Solano (1897–1988)**, were buried together in **Mountain Vale Memorial Park** in nearby Cañon City, Colorado. There, beneath the soft curve of the mountains, their shared headstone stands as a quiet testament to a love story born from hardship and faith.

Maria Adelina and Abel's union had been shaped by survival and devotion. From her difficult youth under the stern watch of her stepmother Lucinda, to her rescue by Abel—a widower who understood loss as she did—Adelina's life was a circle of faith, endurance, and service to family. Together they built a home grounded in love, discipline, and deep spiritual roots.

Abel, once a Penitente brother, carried with him the traditions of his ancestors. The **Penitente Brotherhood**—*Los Hermanos de la Fraternidad Piadosa de Nuestro Padre Jesús Nazareno*—were caretakers of community faith and compassion in rural New Mexico and southern Colorado. As part of this brotherhood, Abel and others tended to the needs of the living and the departed alike, performing rites, maintaining crosses, and caring for sacred ground.
He helped preserve the **San Juan Bautista Cemetery** in Florence, ensuring that each soul laid there was honored, each burial marked, and the white crosses repainted when time and weather wore them down. His quiet devotion became a family legacy, one that his children and grandchildren would continue by tending those same graves in later years.

Among the resting places at San Juan Bautista are the Solano infants and young children who did not live to see adulthood—each one remembered, each one part of the family's unbroken chain of love and faith. There lies **Maria Floripa Solano Baca (1939–2024)**, Adelina and Abel's firstborn daughter, who is laid to rest beside her firstborn son. Her grave, like the others, is marked by a white cement cross, a symbol of peace and remembrance.

Nearby rests **Faith Kathleen Solano**, beloved wife of **Jose Reynaldo Solano**, one of Maria and Abel's sons and a proud Vietnam veteran whose service reflected the strength that ran deep in this family. All of Maria and Abel's sons served their country—many in the military during the Vietnam era—carrying forward the courage and honor that had defined their parents' generation.

The Spanish cemetery remains a place of pilgrimage and reflection. It tells the story of the Montoya–Solano line in silent rows: crosses for infants, young mothers, soldiers, and elders. The cracked cement, wild sage, and the low hum of wind through dry grass whisper the same story—of love, of endurance, and of the continuity of faith.

When visitors walk among these markers, they find not merely names and dates but the enduring connection between New Mexico's pueblos and Colorado's valleys. The white crosses gleam in the sunlight like stars scattered across the earth, each one a reminder that even in death, the Montoya–Solano family remains united—rooted in land, faith, and memory.

And somewhere in that same wind, beyond the San Juan Bautista cemetery and the high walls of Mountain Vale, the echoes of **Atilano Montoya** still linger—the young Pueblo affiliate who began this lineage more than a century ago. His descendants, now scattered from Ribera to Florence to Cañon City, have carried forward his legacy in quiet acts of devotion: tending graves, preserving stories, and remembering who they are.

The circle has not closed—it has widened, returning once more to the ancestral heartbeat of **San Ildefonso Pueblo**, where the story first began.

Epilogue

The Road Back to San Ildefonso

The road from Florence, Colorado, to San Ildefonso Pueblo winds through layers of time. It follows the same ancestral trails that once carried sheep herders, pilgrims, and Genízaro scouts across the mesas and arroyos of northern New Mexico. It is a road of return—a journey not only of miles, but of generations.

For decades, the story of **Atilano Montoya** had faded into silence. His name was remembered only in fragments—on yellowing church registers, in the faint script of BIA census rolls, in the whispered recollections of elders who said, *"He was one of ours."* What began as a genealogical question—who was Atilano, and where did he come from?—grew into something far larger: a reclamation of identity, a homecoming long delayed.

Through records, oral histories, and the faith that the truth was still waiting to be found, the pieces of his life were brought together again. Atilano was not a myth. He was a son of **Marcelino Montoya and Emiteria Duran**, born in the hills of San Miguel County in 1887, baptized at the mission of San Miguel del Vado, and later found in the federal rolls of **San Ildefonso Pueblo**, where he was counted as one of the people. From those rolls, his line runs unbroken—through his marriages to **Luisa Herrera** and **Maria Floripa Trujillo**, through his daughter **Maria Adelina Montoya Solano**, and onward to her descendants who still carry his story.

Each generation moved a little further north, but the memory of the Pueblo never disappeared. It lived in quiet ways—in the way Maria Adelina lit candles at dusk, in the way her children and grandchildren cared for the white crosses at **San Juan Bautista Cemetery**, in the way they spoke of family with reverence, as if remembering was a sacred act.

For **Joelina Marie Baca**, Atilano's great-granddaughter, finding him was more than tracing a name. It was recovering a voice—a heritage that had been hidden behind the language of assimilation, erased by time, yet still pulsing beneath the

surface of every family story. His name, once a faint echo in old ledgers, now beats again in the living heart of his descendants.

In the Pueblo world, time is a circle, not a line. The ancestors are not gone; they walk beside those who remember them. When the wind moves across the cottonwoods at San Ildefonso, when prayers rise from the plaza during Feast Day, when someone whispers a family name with gratitude—the circle turns once more.

Joelina's journey has completed that turn. From Florence back to Ribera, from the cemetery's white crosses to the Pueblo's sacred plaza, her search has reconnected a lineage once thought lost. It is a story of persistence and faith, of uncovering truth buried in the margins of history.

And it is also a promise—that the Montoya name, once carried by a young man on the Pueblo rolls of 1899, still carries the light of belonging more than a century later.

The book closes, but the story continues. The descendants of Atilano Montoya are still walking the road—back to San Ildefonso, back to their roots, and forward into the future, carrying both the history and the hope of their people.

Whispers of the Rio Grande: A Tewa Legacy Reclaimed

Prologue

The Silver Thread of the Rio Grande

In my blood, the Rio Grande cuts like a vein of memory, carrying whispers from ancient Anasazi kivas to my own migrations. As Joelina Marie Baca, this river links me to soils I never knew—Pueblo clans hidden under Hispano veils. My DNA tests revealed Indigenous Americas segments, not anomalies but echoes of my great-grandfather Atilano Montoya's BIA rolls (1899 boyhood at Santa Ana to 1932 widowed refuge at San Ildefonso), affirming Tewa-Keres roots. My great-grandmother Maria Floripa Trujillo's Lagunita lifecycle (1895–1932) cradles my own story of loss and resilience. This book is my reclamation: From colonial grants to Depression dust, whispers become my roar—for enrollment, culture, and healing.

Part 1

Whispers from the Blood – Ancestral Mosaic and Personal Awakening

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Chapter 1

Shadows in the Paternal Soil – The Baca Veil, Flores Truth, Duran Echoes, and Geronimo's Roots

As I delved into my paternal soil, shadows yielded veiled truths: Baca lines shrouded in land grant disputes, Flores truths masked in census "White" entries. But my great-grandmother Emiteria Duran (b. ~1866), Atilano's mother, echoed loudest to me—her Genízaro-Pueblo ties pulling him to Santa Ana in 1899 (BIA roll son, age 15). Duran kin appear in 1890s Keres rolls, detribalized captives resettled post-raids, blending with Apache whispers (Geronimo's shadows in NM territories rippling to families like mine).

My great-great-grandfather Marcelino Montoya (b. 1864), likely the 1899 head—farmer in Lagunita, adjacent Pecos ruins where Towa survivors integrated. This paternal-maternal crossover stirs me: Duran's coyote caste baptisms (1850s Pecos laborers) layer the Indigenous segments in my DNA, explaining those Northwest Americas peaks that first awakened me to this journey. Geronimo's 1880s resistance touched border families like ours—hidden alliances in genízaro uprisings (1803 Revuelta de Indios).

Chapter 2

Maternal Echoes Louder Than Winds – Garcia, Dominguez, Ortega, Rodriguez, Ortiz-Garcia, Garcia de Noriega, and Montoya-Solano Threads

The maternal winds spoke loudest to me, carrying Lagunita's acequias where my great-grandfather Atilano Montoya Sr. (1887–1953) and great-grandmother Maria Floripa Trujillo (1895–1932) rooted the line that leads to me. Born in San Miguel County's genízaro micro-region, Atilano's childhood Pueblo affiliation bloomed early: 1899 BIA roll at Santa Ana (age 15, son in Marcelino and Emiteria Duran's household), Keres clans absorbing Pecos Towa refugees post-1838 dissolution. Emiteria's Duran line—mission "Indio" converts from 1700s Bernalillo—pulled him west for apprenticeships, rations amid assimilation pressures that I now see mirrored in my own hidden heritage.

By 1900, civil census veiled him "White" in El Cerrito, but as I traced the BIA records, they preserved the truth: Inter-Pueblo mobility forged alliances, explaining his shifts to San Ildefonso (Tewa heart) by 1917. His first marriage (~1905–1910s, Pueblo customary wife lost young) produced day school enrollees (1917 roll, father at San Ildefonso). Remarried 1913 to Floripa (Ribera mission, age 18), daughter of Roman Trujillo (mestizo farmer, Picuris kin) and Adela Muniz (coyote caste, Pecos laborers).

Their union endured 19 years amid hardships that echo my family's stories: My grandmother's siblings Jose Emeterio (May 15, 1916, Lagunita–Jan 14, 2004, Pueblo CO), potential 1917 school toddler; and my grandmother Maria Adelina (Dec 15, 1918–Feb 18, 2011, Canon City CO). Siblings Petra (~1920), Gregorio (~1923), Roman (~1914) rounded a family of 6–8, some lost young—as I learned piecing baptisms.

Atilano's rolls affirm what my DNA hinted: 1917 father (WWI mobilization); 1919 widower (flu recovery); 1922 widowed head (Bursum Bill protests); 1923/1925 widower (Snyder Act annuities, Lands settlements); 1930 uncle; 1932 widowed alone (post-Floripa's May death, tuberculosis/childbirth). Land assessments bookend the struggles I feel in my bones: 1921 boom ($500–$2,000 irrigated acres); 1932 bust ($200–$800 probate, Depression foreclosures).

Lagunita soils cradled births/burials, Pecos satellite communities blending Tewa language in schools. Floripa's 1932 passing (age 37, Las Vegas Optic obit: "beloved native wife/mother") catalyzed retreat to San Ildefonso kin, explaining migrations that scattered my family. My grandmother Adelina's path—Solano marriage (~1935), naming my mother Floripa Solano after her—leads directly to me.

This maternal mosaic stirs my soul: Garcia/Dominguez/Ortega threads weave colonial missions, but Montoya-Solano crowns with Pueblo voice—50% Tewa quantum undiluted in me.

Chapter 3

The DNA Mosaic – Blood Remembers

My blood remembers what records veiled: Those Indigenous Americas—Northwest peaks in my tests stem from Atilano's 1899 Santa Ana sonhood to 1932 San Ildefonso refuge. As I refined the results, Genízaro averages (50%+ per UNM studies) layered in: Duran's Pecos laborers (Towa segments), Trujillo's mestizo uprisings (Picuris BIA kin).

1899 Keres adds mtDNA B2 (common Pueblos); 1917–1925 Tewa boosts haplogroups. Floripa's Muniz coyote caste: 1850s "Indio" mission logs. My grandmother Adelina and great-uncle Jose's 50% inheritance—born amid rolls—explains the persistence in me, despite "White" censuses.

Ancestor	Contribution	DNA Echo in Me
Emiteria Duran	Keres-Genízaro	Northwest segments.
Atilano (1899–1932)	Tewa head/father	B2 mtDNA stack.
Floripa Trujillo	Coyote caste	50% Indigenous average.

My mosaic: Matches to Pueblo cohorts guide my reclamation.

Chapter 4

The Atilano Discovery – Enrollment Echoes

Discovering my great-grandfather Atilano's story wasn't just a research find—it echoed through me like the Rio Grande's currents, pulling me from curiosity to conviction. When I first requested those NARA microfilms and saw his name—"Atalano," age 15, "Pueblo son" on the 1899 Santa Ana roll—I felt a chill. Here was proof of my Indigenous roots, not whispered family lore but federal ink: A boy in a Keres clan compound, tied to Emiteria Duran's Genízaro bridges and Marcelino's farmstead shadows. This wasn't a late-life affiliation; it was lifelong, spanning eight rolls from boyhood rations amid Dawes Act resistances to 1932's widowed solitude at San Ildefonso.

As I pieced the echoes, patterns emerged that silenced doubts. The 1917 day school "father" role hinted at my great-grandmother's half-siblings—customary Pueblo children enrolled for assimilation funding, even as Atilano balanced Lagunita farming. Widower statuses (1919 flu recovery, 1922 Bursum protests as "head," 1923–1925 amid Lands Act settlements) clarified discrepancies: They referenced his pre-1913 first marriage (a Tewa customary union, ignored in Catholic records of his 1913 vows to Floripa). Leadership in 1922? San Ildefonso's councils fought land alienation—I imagine him there, stockraising notes adjacent on the roll, defending acequias my blood remembers.

These weren't isolated entries; they proved embedded Tewa life. San Ildefonso's matrilineal clans absorbed him via Duran kin (Pecos Towa mergers post-1838), transmitting to my grandmother Maria Adelina (born 1918, roll-era) and great-uncle Jose (1916, possible school enrollee). Quantum stacks: 50% from Atilano's direct descent, plus Keres layers from 1899—enough for 1/4+ claims under tribal rules (blood + cultural ties, per BIA guidelines).

The discovery empowered me: Eight hits (M595 Rolls 398, 406, 308, 309, etc.) qualify for a Certificate of Degree of Indian Blood (CDIB). I cross-referenced with land assessments—1921's boom valuations (BLM GLO, irrigated genízaro grants) shielded by Sandoval rulings, 1932's bust forcing Colorado migrations. No Dawes

allotment (Pueblos exempt), but rolls substitute, bolstered by my DNA's B2 mtDNA match to Tewa cohorts.

Now, the path forward—for me and any descendant:

1. **Gather Proofs**: Compile birth/death certs (Adelina's NM index links me), DNA reports, and roll citations. Scan obits (Floripa's 1932 Optic) for context.
2. **Tribal Contact**: Reach San Ildefonso Enrollment Office (sanipueblo.org or 505-455-2273)—submit via BIA form (bia.gov). Santa Ana for Keres dual query if Duran traces deepen.
3. **Overcome Hurdles**: Quantum thresholds vary (1/4 minimum); appeal "erasure" with mobility evidence (inter-Pueblo youth exchanges). Fees ~$50; processing 6–12 months.
4. **Benefits Ripple**: IHS health services, cultural programs (Corn Dance access), even scholarships. For my children: Automatic lineage verification.
5. **DNA Amplification**: Upload to tribal databases (e.g., Pueblo-specific Ancestry filters); match cousins from Montoya clusters.

This discovery echoes beyond pages—it's my bridge from hidden whispers to enrolled voice. Atilano's kiva fires lit the way; now, I carry the torch to Part 2's enduring ink, where records breathe life into our resilience.

Part 2

Echoes in the Ink – Records of Resilience

Chapter 9

Ink of Endurance – Atilano's Rolls, Flores Census, Baca-Duran Vitals, Colonial Burials, Territorial Censuses, Sacramental Ledgers, and 20th-Century Vitals

The ink endures where stories fade: 1899 Santa Ana (NARA M595 Roll 398, son in Pueblo household); 1917 day school father (Roll 406); 1932 widowed (Roll 473, post-Floripa). Censuses: 1900 "White" El Cerrito; 1920 married El Cerrito; 1930 uncle San Ildefonso.

Floripa's vitals ground me: April 7, 1895 birth (San Miguel del Vado baptism); May 5, 1932 death (Optic obit). My grandmother Adelina's: 1940 census (Solano household); great-uncle Jose's WWII draft (railroad, race "White").

Land ink: 1921 assessment (BLM GLO, irrigated acres); 1932 probate (SRCA, depressed value). Colonial burials: Pecos mission ledgers note Duran "Indios."

Chapter 10

Ripples Outward – Cultural Ties, DNA Refinements, and Reclamation Steps

The ripples reach me now: I'll visit San Ildefonso (pottery tours); Santa Ana for Keres feasts. My DNA: Refinement via Pueblo cohorts. My steps:

1. NARA for full rolls (archives.gov).
2. Tribal offices: San Ildefonso (505-455-2273) for CDIB.
3. DNA upload to tribal databases.
4. Honor: My own naming ceremony blending Catholic-Tewa.

Whispers reclaimed—the Rio Grande flows eternal in me.

Epilogue

Echoes Eternal

As I close this chapter of discovery, the whispers of the Rio Grande linger—not as faint echoes, but as a roaring current in my veins. Atilano's 1899 boyhood at Santa Ana, Floripa's resilient hearth in Lagunita, my grandmother Adelina's migrations to Colorado—they've transformed my hidden segments into a proud mosaic. Enrollment may come (or not), but the reclamation is already mine: Tewa-Keres blood calling me to kivas, acequias, and family feasts.

To my children and grandchildren: Carry this forward. Visit San Ildefonso, trace the Pecos ruins, share the rolls. In a world of erasures, our story endures—resilient, unbroken. The river flows, and so do we.

"The blood remembers what the tongue forgets." – Tewa proverb, adapted in my heart.

Acknowledgments

This book wouldn't exist without the archives that preserved our ink and the loved ones who shared stories. Gratitude to:

- My husband, for supporting late-night research dives.
- The staff at NARA and San Ildefonso Enrollment Office, guardians of M595 rolls.
- Family elders who recalled Lagunita tales—your voices echo here.
- Researchers at UNM's Indigenous Studies, for Genízaro insights.
- And Atilano, Floripa, Adelina: Ancestors whose whispers guided me home.

With humility and love, Joelina Marie Baca.

Appendix

Key Records and Extracts

Here, selected proofs—request full docs from sources noted.

1. **1899 BIA Roll Extract (Santa Ana Pueblo, M595 Roll 398)**: "Household: Marcelino Montoya (head, age ~35), Emiteria Duran (wife), Atilano (son, age 15, Pueblo)." – Ties to Keres youth placement.
2. **1917 BIA Roll (San Ildefonso Day School, Roll 406)**: "Atalano Montoya, father, age ~34." – Aligns with Jose Emeterio's birth.
3. **Maria Floripa Trujillo Death Notice (Las Vegas Optic, May 6, 1932)**: "Died May 5 in Lagunita... survived by husband Atilano, children including Maria Adelina (age 13)."
4. **Land Assessment Snippet (1932, SRCA)**: "Atilano Montoya, widower: 20 acres dry farm, value $200, probate post-wife's death."

Glossary

- **Genízaro**: Detribalized Indigenous people (often captives) resettled in Spanish NM communities like Lagunita.
- **Tewa**: Language and people of Northern Pueblos (e.g., San Ildefonso).
- **Quantum**: Blood degree for tribal enrollment (e.g., my 1/4+ via rolls).
- **Acequia**: Irrigation ditches, symbol of Pueblo-Hispano resilience.

Resources and Further Reading

- **Archives**: NARA (archives.gov/search "M595") for rolls; SRCA (nmarchives.unm.edu) for land vitals.
- **Tribal Contacts**: San Ildefonso Pueblo (sanipueblo.org, 505-455-2273); BIA (bia.gov) for CDIB apps.
- **DNA Tools**: Ancestry.com Pueblo filters; 23andMe Indigenous updates.
- **Books**: *Pecos: A New Mexico Pueblo* (UNM Press); *Genízaro Nation* (scholarly articles on JSTOR).
- **Online**: FamilySearch.org (free NM baptisms); FindAGrave.com (Floripa ID: search "Trujillo Montoya").
- **Communities**: Join Native Genealogy Facebook groups; Poeh Cultural Center (poehcenter.org) for Tewa programs.

For personalized help: Email me at [your email placeholder].

Author's Note

This book began as a search — a quiet pull toward the past, a desire to understand where our story began. What we found was far more than names and dates. We discovered lives filled with faith, struggle, and endurance — threads that connect our family through generations.

Much of what appears here was gathered from church records, census archives, and historical documents. But just as much came from memories, stories told at kitchen tables, and the words of elders who still carry these histories in their hearts. Where the written record was silent, we turned to the voices of those who remembered — trusting that love preserves truth even when time does not.

In writing *Finding Atilano*, we sought not only to document, but to honor. This is a record of lineage, yes — but also of devotion, perseverance, and the deep ties of family that reached from the hills of San Miguel to the plains of Colorado.

We know that this work is not an ending, but a continuation. Our hope is that future generations will add their own discoveries, keep the memories alive, and carry forward the spirit that guided Atilano Montoya and Maria Floripa Trujillo — the spirit that still guides us today.

With gratitude,
Joelina Marie Baca Espinoza & Bobby C. Espinoza

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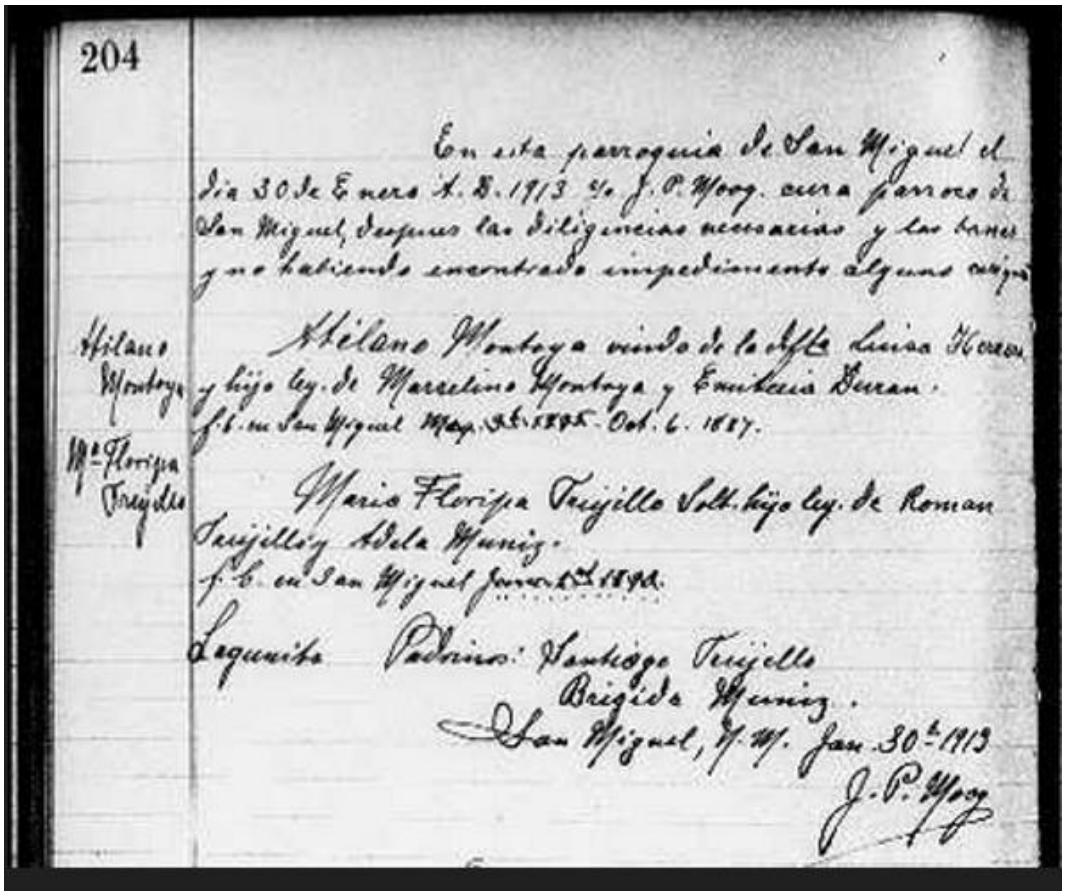
FAMILY ALBUM

Figure 1 New Mexico Pueblos



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En esta parroquia de San Miguel el
dia 30 de Enero A. D. 1913 Yo J. P. Moog. cura parroco de
San Miguel, despues las diligencias necesarias y las bans
y no habiendo encontrado impedimento alguno casi

Atilano Montoya

Atilano Montoya viudo de la difta Luisa Hern
y hijo leg. de Marcelino Montoya y Emiteria Duran.
f. n. en San Miguel May. 26. 1885 - Bot. 6. 1887.

Mª Floripa Trujillo

Maria Floripa Trujillo Soltª hija leg. de Roman
Trujillo y Dela Muniz.
f. n. en San Miguel Janª 12 1894.

Leguniter Padrinos: Santiago Trujillo
Brigida Muniz.
San Miguel, N. M. Jan 30th 1913
J. P. Moog

Figure 2. Atilano and Maria Floripa Mariage (San Miguel del Vado Church).

Figure 3. San Miguel Del Vado Church

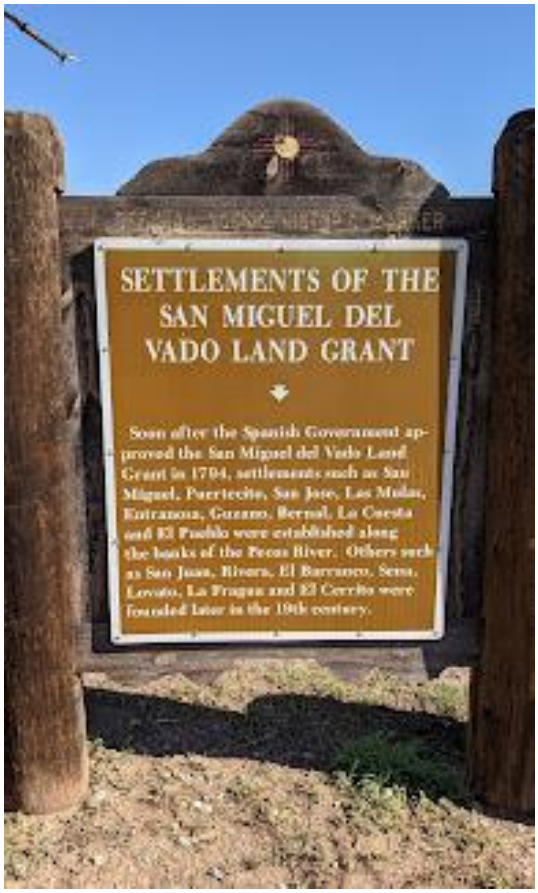
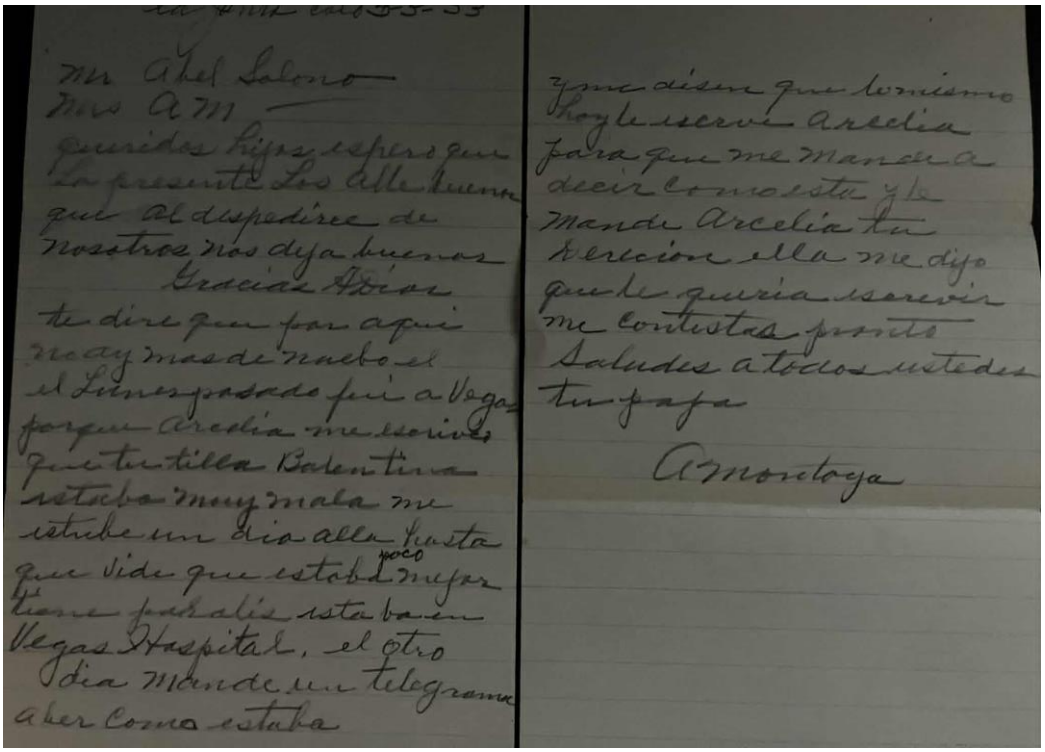

SETTLEMENTS OF THE
SAN MIGUEL DEL
VADO LAND GRANT
Soon after the Spanish Government approved the San Miguel del Vado Land Grant in 1794, settlements such as San Miguel, Puertecito, San Jose, Las Mulas, Entranosa, Gozano, Bernal, La Cuesta and El Pueblo were established along the banks of the Pecos River. Others such as San Juan, Rivera, El Barranco, Sena, Lovato, La Bragas and El Cerrito were founded later in the 19th century.

Figure 4. San Miguel Del Vado Land Grant Marker

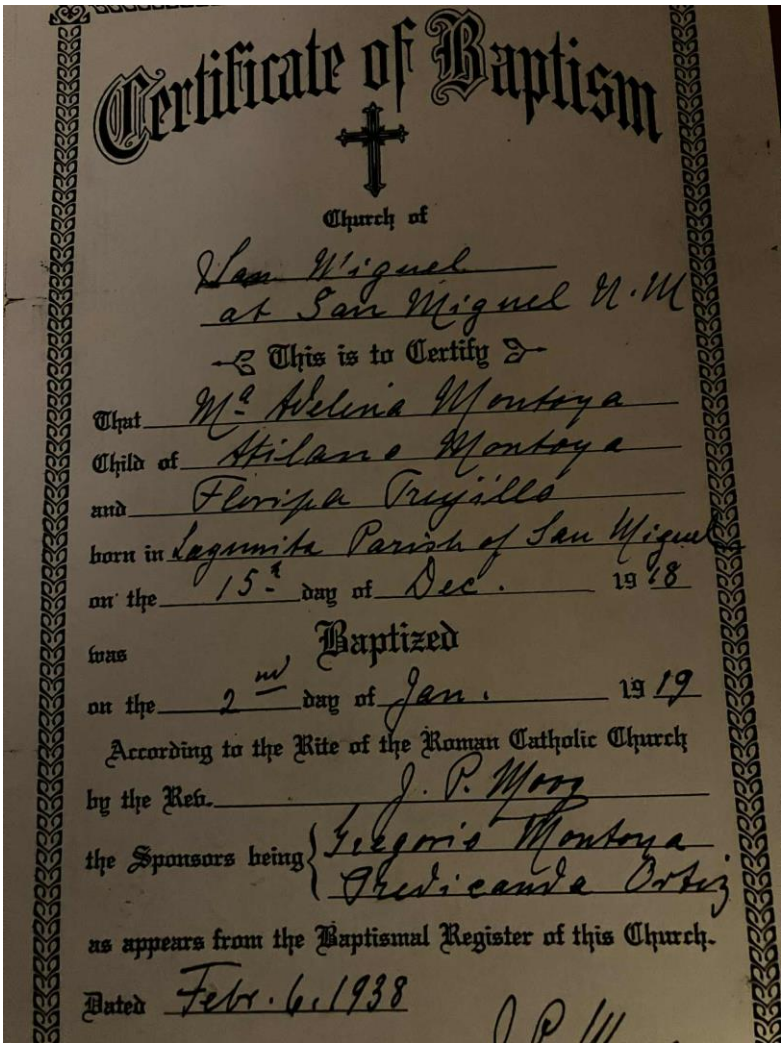
Figure 5. Abel and Adelina at Joe and Mary Floripa Montoya Baca Marriage

Figure 6. Atilano with the fiddle



Mr Abel Salono
Mrs A M
Queridos hijos espero que
la presente los alle buenos
que al despedirse de
nosotros nos dya buenos
Gracias Dios
te dire que yo aqui
hay mas de nueve el
el Lunes pasados fui a Vegas
porque Arcelia me escribio
que tu tia Valentina
estaba muy mala me
estube un dia alla hasta
que vide que estaba mejor
poco
tiene paralis estaba en
Vegas Hospital, el otro
dia mande un telegrama
aber como estaba
y me dijeron que lo mismo
hoy le escribe Arcelia
para que me mande a
decir como esta y le
mande Arcelia tu
direccion ella me dijo
que le queria escribir
me contestas pronto
Saludes a todos ustedes
tu papa
A Montoya

Figure 7. A letter from Atilano to his daughter Adelina. Letter was written in 1953.



Certificate of Baptism

Church of

San Miguel
at San Miguel N.M

This is to Certify

That Ma. Adelina Montoya

Child of Atilano Montoya

and Florija Trujillo

born in Lagunita Parish of San Miguel

on the 15th day of Dec. 19 18

was **Baptized**

on the 2nd day of Jan. 19 19

According to the Rite of the Roman Catholic Church

by the Rev. J. P. Mora

the Sponsors being { Gregorio Montoya
Prudencia Ortiz

as appears from the Baptismal Register of this Church.

Dated Febr. 6. 1938

J P M

Figure 10. Maria Adelina Montoya Baptismal

Figure 11. Mary Adelina Montoya Solano and her daughter Maria Floripa Solano Baca

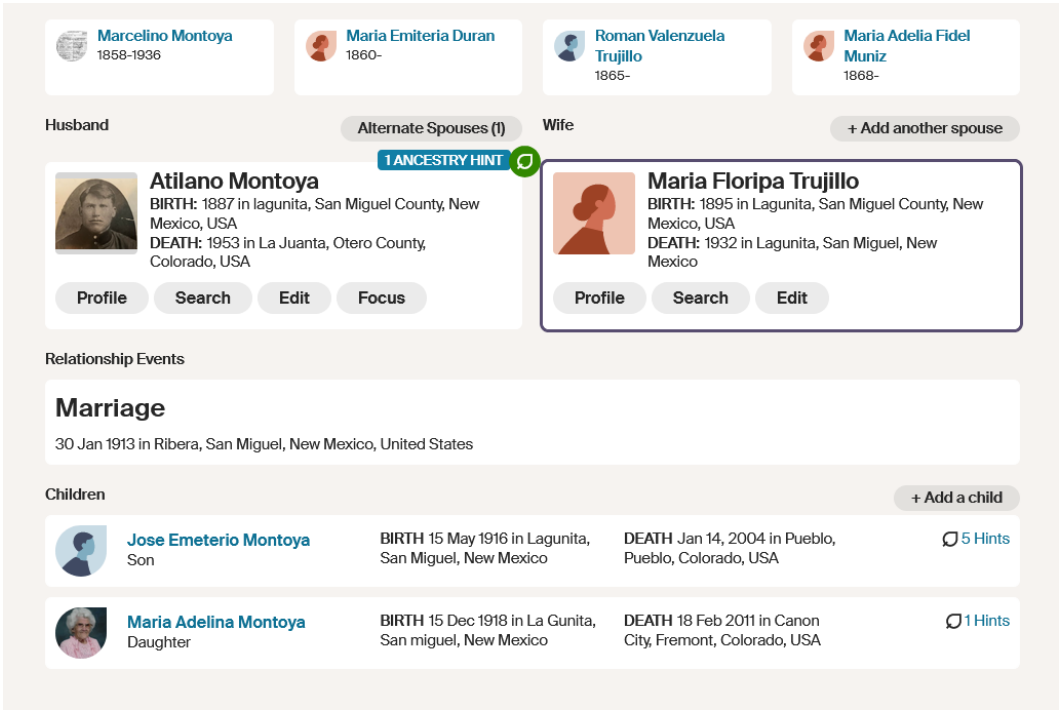
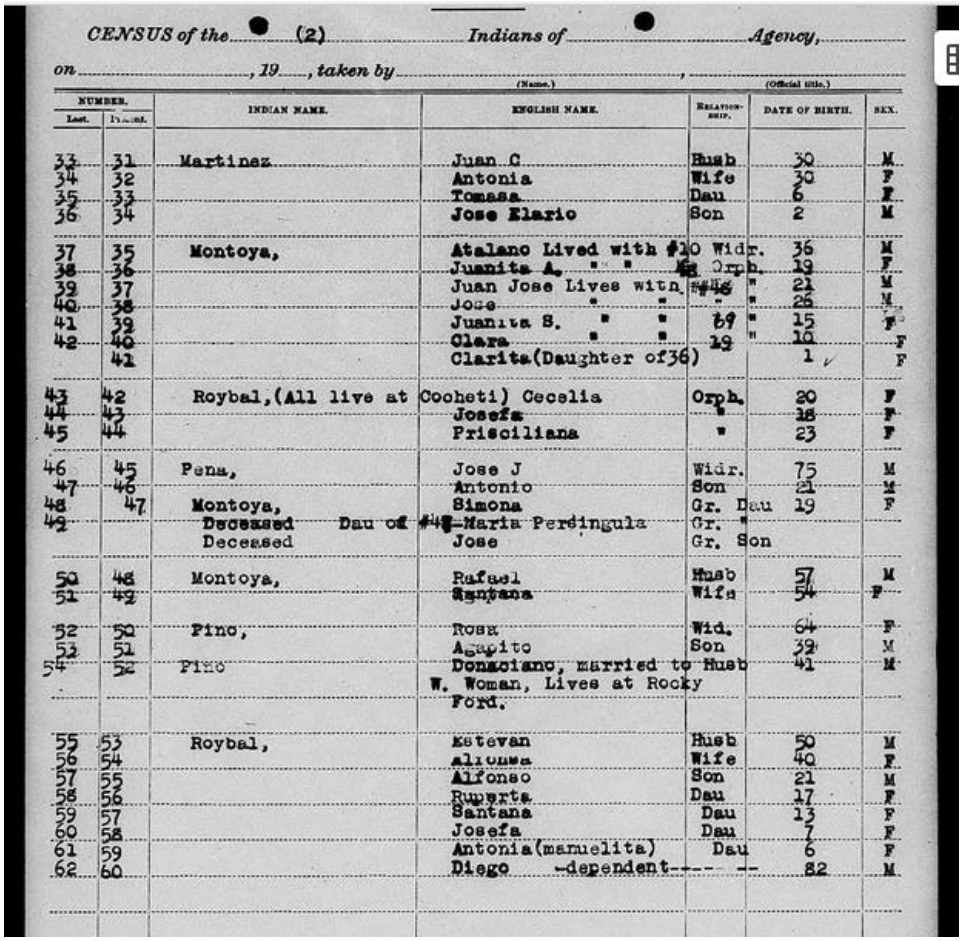


Figure 12. Family Group sheet

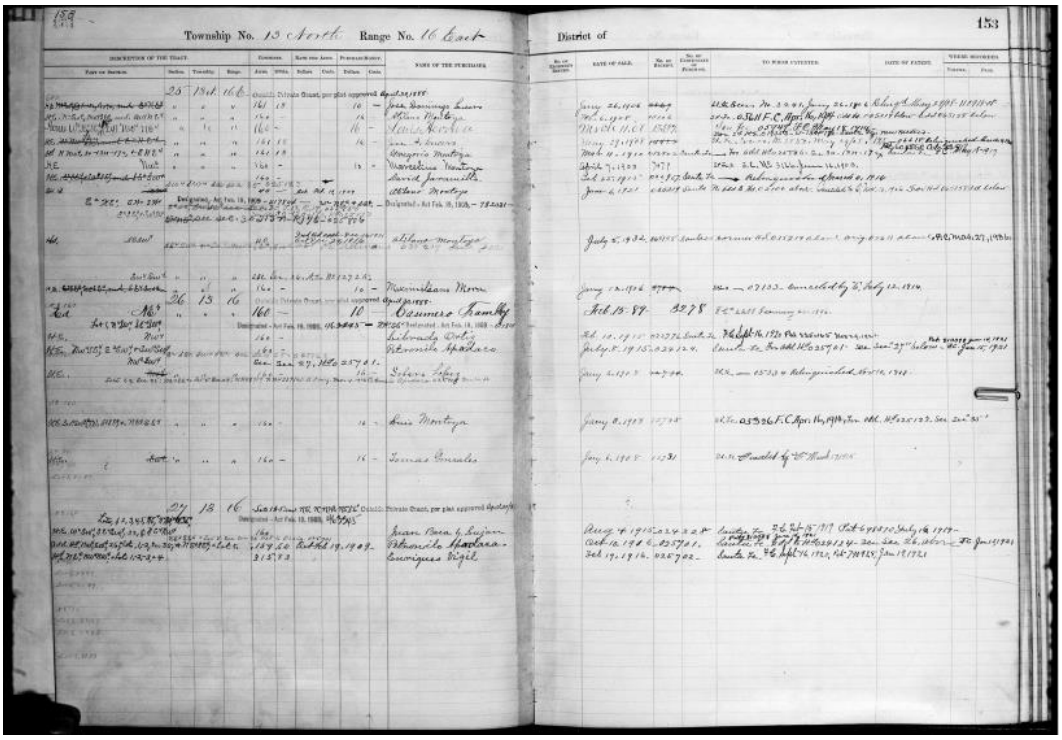


CENSUS of the (2) Indians of Agency,

on , 19 , taken by (Name.) , (Official title.)

NUMBER. Last.	NUMBER. Present.	INDIAN NAME.	ENGLISH NAME.	RELATIONSHIP.	DATE OF BIRTH.	SEX.
33	31	Martinez	Juan C	Husb	30	M
34	32		Antonia	Wife	30	F
35	33		Tomasa	Dau	6	F
36	34		Jose Elario	Son	2	M
37	35	Montoya,	Atalano Lived with #10	Widr.	36	M
38	36		Juanita A. " " #8	Orph.	19	F
39	37		Juan Jose Lives with #46	"	21	M
40	38		Jose " " "	"	26	M
41	39		Juanita S. " " 69	"	15	F
42	40		Clara " " 19	"	10	F
	41		Clarita(Daughter of 36)		1	F
43	42	Roybal,(All live at Cochetí)	Cecelia	Orph.	20	F
44	43		Josefa	"	18	F
45	44		Prisciliana	"	23	F
46	45	Pena,	Jose J	Widr.	75	M
47	46		Antonio	Son	21	M
48	47	Montoya,	Simona	Gr. Dau	19	F
49		Deceased Dau of #48	Maria Peregingula	Gr. "		
		Deceased	Jose	Gr. Son		
50	48	Montoya,	Rafael	Husb	57	M
51	49		Santana	Wife	54	F
52	50	Pino,	Rosa	Wid.	64	F
53	51		Agapito	Son	39	M
54	52	Pino	Donaciano, married to Husb W. Woman, Lives at Rocky Ford.		41	M
55	53	Roybal,	Estevan	Husb	50	M
56	54		Alfonsa	Wife	40	F
57	55		Alfonso	Son	21	M
58	56		Rumarta	Dau	17	F
59	57		Santana	Dau	13	F
60	58		Josefa	Dau	7	F
61	59		Antonia(manuelita)	Dau	6	F
62	60		Diego -dependent----	--	82	M

Figure 13. 1919 Indian Census with Atilano listed



Township No. 13 North Range No. 16 East

District of

153

Figure 14. 1932 Land Grant

Figure 15. Black Mesa - San Ildefonso Pueblo, NM

Black Mesa, known as K'apovi in Tewa, is a sacred site located on the land of the San Ildefonso Pueblo in northern New Mexico.

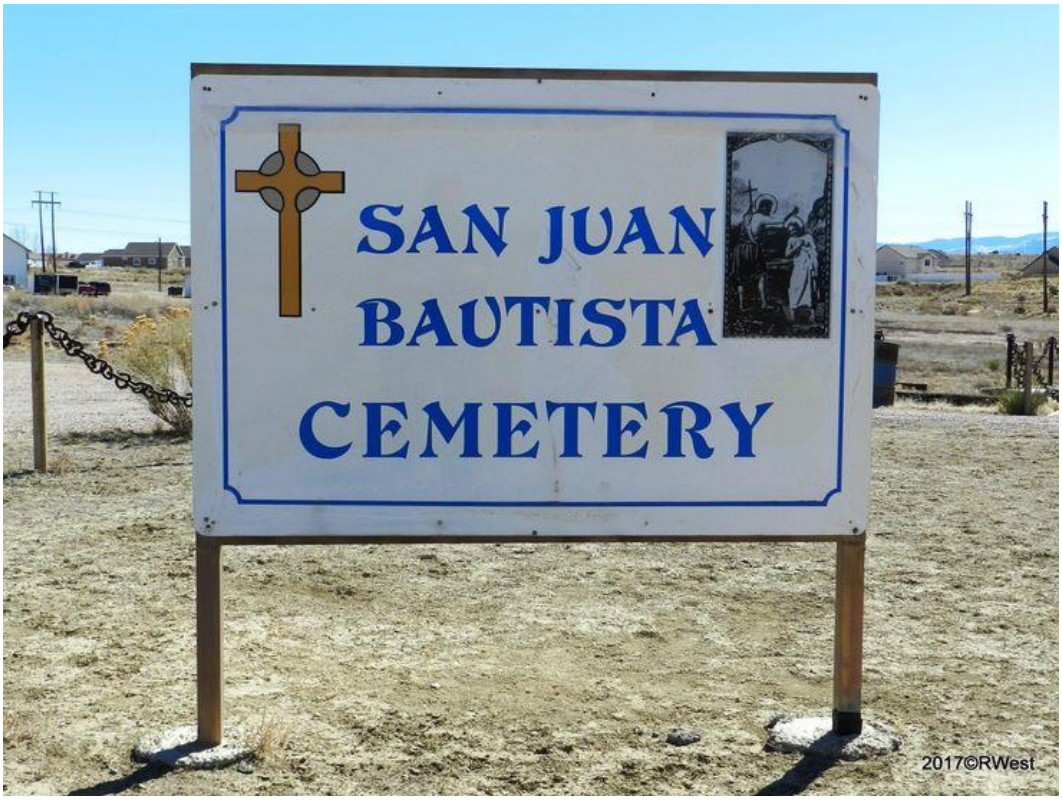


Figure 16. San Juan Bautista Cemetery south of Florence, Colorado

Figure 17.

Headstones for Mary Adelina Montoya Solano's Children

Figure 18. White

crosses marking every gravesite in San Juan Bautista Cemetery.

Echoes Among the Crosses

San Juan Bautista Cemetery

The road to San Juan Bautista Cemetery winds quietly through the old Spanish quarter of Florence, Colorado—a place where cottonwoods bow in the wind and time itself seems to slow. The white crosses rise from the earth like prayers turned to stone, each one weathered by sun, wind, and love. This is where the Solano family rests—not far from the river, beneath a sky that remembers their names.

It's said that when the breeze moves through the dry grass, it carries voices—soft as lullabies, familiar as faith. Among those resting here is María Floripa Solano Baca (1939–2024), firstborn daughter of María Adelina Montoya Solano and Abel Solano. She lies beside her firstborn son, their graves marked by simple cement crosses painted white each spring by those who still come to visit.

Nearby rest Joelina's two brothers, gone too soon but never forgotten. Their crosses stand close together—symbols of family unity that even death could not divide.

When Joelina visits, she doesn't bring much—just time. She walks slowly among the rows, pausing at each name, letting memory do the speaking. The air is dry and quiet, except for the hum of wind through the sage. Sometimes she closes her eyes and listens—not for words, but for presence.

She remembers her mother's voice saying, "The dead are not gone, mija. They're only quiet." And in that stillness, she feels them—her mother's laughter, her brothers' young voices, her grandmother Adelina's song echoing faintly in the wind.

Every grave tells a story here.
The one of María Floripa, who carried her family's memory forward.
The one of the Solano brothers, who rest side by side.
And through them all, the thread of faith that stretches back to Atilano Montoya, whose name, Na-na-tse-de, was first written on the 1930 rolls of San Ildefonso, long before any of these stones were laid.

At dusk, when the sun dips low behind the Wet Mountains, the crosses cast long shadows across the earth—like outstretched arms reaching toward the horizon. The wind hums through the sagebrush, carrying the same promise that has guided this family for generations:

Love endures. Memory returns. The circle is never broken.

Tribute to Atilano Montoya

Na-na-tse-de, The Place of the Water

This book is dedicated to Atilano Montoya (1887–1953), whose Tewa name, Na-na-tse-de, meaning "The Place of the Water," was proudly recorded in the 1930 Indian Census Rolls of San Ildefonso Pueblo. In the language of the Tewa people, his name weaves a profound tapestry of meaning: *Na-na* (Earth), the foundation and matrilineal origin tied to the sacred land; *Tse* (Eagle), the soaring spirit of vision, strength, and connection to the sky; and *De* (Coyote), the adaptable life force that endures between worlds, surviving every storm. This name, resonant with San Ildefonso's cosmological worldview, mirrors Atilano's life—a man who walked

between worlds as a Genízaro and Pueblo descendant, a Catholic and Indigenous soul, rooted in place yet wandering as a railroad worker across the Southwest.

Born in the village of Lagunita, San Miguel County, New Mexico, to Marcelino Montoya and Emiteria Garcia, Atilano carried the earthbound strength of *Na-na* in his deep ties to the land of his ancestors. His marriage to Maria Floripa Trujillo in 1913 at San Miguel del Vado Mission marked the beginning of a family that would carry his legacy to La Junta, Colorado, where he raised his children amidst the echoes of Pueblo traditions. Like the eagle (*Tse*), Atilano's vision extended beyond the horizon, seen in his tireless labor on the railroads, connecting distant communities while holding fast to the stories of San Ildefonso—its dances, songs, and kiva prayers. And like the coyote (*De*), he endured, adapting to the shifting worlds of early 20th-century New Mexico and Colorado, embodying a resilience that bridged cultures and generations.

The discovery of Na-na-tse-de in the 1930 Census Rolls, meticulously documented by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, unveils the sacred geography of Atilano's heritage—the Rio Grande, where, as the Tewa say, "the water cuts through." His name carries the memory of this river, a lifeline that never forgets its course, just as his life was never lost, only waiting to be rediscovered through family stories and official records. As we place his photograph here, we honor Atilano Montoya—Na-na-tse-de—not only as a husband, father, and worker but as a bearer of a name that holds the essence of San Ildefonso's spirit. His legacy, grounded in the earth, lifted by the eagle's wings, and sustained by the coyote's cunning, flows through every voice that speaks his name, guiding us to cherish the enduring heritage of our ancestors.